

FLIGHT JACKET

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Sgt. Terrance Clark, CH-53E crew chief, Heavy Marine Helicopter Squadron 462, holds up the letter on behalf of his squadron stating that the Heavy Haulers have been honored with the Secretary of Defense Maintenance Award. Photo by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

HMH-462 honored with 2004 Secretary of Defense Maintenance Award

Story by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

The Department of Defense selected Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462 for the 2004 Secretary of Defense Maintenance Award Sept. 8 for outstanding achievements in military equipment and weapons systems maintenance.

The Heavy Haulers will be officially recognized at the Secretary of Defense Maintenance Awards Banquet Oct. 27 at the Hilton Americas in Houston.

"I would like to take every one of these Marines to the banquet. I am so proud of them," said Lt. Col. Dennis R. Stephens, commanding officer, HMH-462. "The Marines keep proving themselves all of the time and this award is a testament to how well they have performed."

HMH-462 was one of six squadrons selected for the esteemed award out of the entire Department of Defense. The Heavy Haulers, along with the 509th Munitions Squadron at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., were selected to represent the small category.

For the 2002 and 2003 fiscal years, the squadron accumulated approximately 4,700 mishap free flight hours. In the 2004 fiscal year, the Heavy Haulers flew an addi-

tional 2,227 hours without accidents. When they deployed to Kuwait in January 2003, the squadron flew, on average, 680 hours per month.

In just two weeks prior to deploying, the Heavy Haulers broke down the squadron's 16 aircraft to prepare for transfer. The squadron had the aircraft completely rebuilt and ready for combat operations only two weeks after arriving in Kuwait, making it the largest aircraft break down and build up in Marine Corps history.

"That record is what this squadron is known for," explained Cpl. Joel D. Hutcherson, avionics technician, HMH-462. "We can do the impossible."

According to Master Sgt. Pete Reyes, maintenance chief, HMH-462, the secret to a strong squadron is taking care of its Marines.

"If you take care of your Marines, they'll do the rest," stated Reyes, a Los Angeles native.

Reyes also added that the key to accomplishing any mission is to let the sergeants run the show and have the staff noncommissioned officers watch over them.

"While the sergeants run maintenance, we take care of the Marines on a personal level. We also overlook the

Reservists train to clear minefields

Story by Cpl. Joel A. Chaverri

MWHS-3 Combat Correspondent

ALASAD, Iraq — The sun is high and beating down on a focused Marine as he moves across the desert as carefully as possible. Sweat trickles down his face and back as he tries his best to remain calm.

Each cautious step is as nerve racking as the last, as the sun-drenched leatherneck advances forward, hoping that he has scanned the area sufficiently, since the lives of his fellow Marines may hang in the balance.

Scanning for mines isn't the safest job, but it's a necessary one because improvised explosive devices and mines have been responsible for numerous deaths during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Marine reservists from Peoria, Ill., have been called to active duty to serve with Combat Service Support Battalion 7, 1st Force Service Support Group, and conducted training here with an upgraded metal detector Sep. 4.

The combat engineers participating in the training are responsible for constructing and repairing military structures and facilities. As a result, they need to be able to scan possible mine-polluted areas and clear the vicinity of anything that could hinder construction progress.

The new AN/PSS-14 metal detector has all of the features of the previous model, but also includes ground-penetrating radar to find mines deep underground.

"(I feel) it's important that (all my students) learn how to use this new detector," said course instructor Cpl. Josh B. Blankenship, combat engineer, CSSB-7. "It's a complicated machine and requires a lot of hands-on experience."

The Marine Corps recently added the new detector to its arsenal, so Marines throughout the Corps are studying up for new tests.

"It's a weeklong class with a written portion on the first day," explained Blankenship, a 22-year-old native of Springfield, Ill. "The written test must be passed before the student can go through the rest of the training."

Each Marine going through the training has to clear multiple lanes with simulated mines placed in random locations and depths by the instructors.

"Each lane is different, and they get increasingly harder as you go through the course."

"There are about 20 to 30 mines per lane," he continued. "The student uses the radar detector to find the mine, and then places a marker where he thinks the center is."

In order to pass, the Marine has to find every mine in the lane. If he fails, he is allowed one remediation session before having to take the entire course again.

Having strict rules and regulations for the instructing and testing of the Marines ensures that they are truly prepared to perform a service that leaves virtually no room for error.

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Inside

Weekend forecast from Miramar's weather station



78°/61°
Today



73°/60°
Saturday



71°/60°
Sunday

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train at local
water park
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Be thankful for community outreach

Commentary by Sgt. J.L. Zimmer III

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Let me start off by saying that my return from Iraq in June was the most glorious moment thus far in my Marine Corps career. Stepping off that commercial flight and feeling cool asphalt under my boots for the first time in what seemed like forever was the greatest feeling in the world. The welcomed embrace of my wife and two sons made the moment even more special for me. I thanked my family for supporting me while I was gone, and thanked them again for being there when I got back to this beautiful country we live in.

It's easy to thank our families, but I feel that I am one of the few who thanks even those I don't know. What about the citizenry of the good ol' USA? They throw us parties and offer rebates at car dealers, and we thanklessly take advantage of the things that benefit us.

I would like to say shame on all those Marines and Sailors out there who hear of welcome home parties, say to themselves, "That is so nice of them," but do not show up. We fight for these people's freedoms and rights; the least we could do is spare a few precious moments of our time and let them appreciate us.

How many of you have been to a welcome home bash? I have been to a few of them, and to hear these people, young and old, tell me how great we are for what we do makes me even more proud to have earned the title Marine. But most of all, it makes me proud to be part of the greatest nation ever established.

They—our communities—need to tell us personally how much they worry about us while we are gone, and how much of an impact we have made on the future of this great nation. We have an obligation to these people. Lets do one more thing for the American public that means more to them than serving in the first place.

For instance, a local community group has gone through the trouble to send a letter to Congressman Duncan Hunter, chairman of the Armed Services Committee, requesting his assistance in putting on a welcome home picnic to honor us—the servicemembers in the San Diego area who have returned from deployment overseas, and our families.

Now, I don't know about you, but I would feel pretty unappreciated and even a little betrayed if someone whom I honored—honored so much, I wrote my congressman to help me honor them—didn't even show up to the party I threw for them. Being the tip of the spear, it is easy for us to feel like we have the ability to make a difference. Most American civilians don't have that luxury. So, they contribute how and when they can, by welcoming us with open arms.

So, on September 25, from 12 to 6 p.m., I'll be at the El Cajon Elks Lodge, enjoying the food, fun, music and relaxation San Diego's proud Americans are providing us. I think it's a great idea, and I am honored. Congressman Hunter must think it is a pretty good idea too, since he's flying in all the way from Washington, D.C. I hope I see all of you there.



Is this your Passat?

The above vehicle is marked for impound by the Provost Marshal's Office. To avoid having the vehicle towed, please store it in the Marine Corps Community Services or Traffic Management Office lot. For more information, contact 577-1276 or 577-4150.

MIRAMARKS

“Why is it important to donate to the Combined Federal Campaign?”



LANCE CPL. CHRISTOPHER PYNE
Parachute Rigger
MALS-11

“There are a lot of good organizations out there, and a lot of them wouldn't be around without the CFC. To the individual or organization that needs the help, it's nice to have something to turn to.”

CPL. OVERLIN RODRIGUEZ
Avionics Technician
VMGR-352

“I don't really ever donate. I'm not familiar with any charities I want to support. If someone in my family had an illness I'd probably give to support that organization.”



CPL. MATTHEW J. DIENER,
Airframe Mechanic
MALS-11



“Helping people out that can't help themselves is something that everyone should do.”

CG announces CFC kickoff

This year's CFC campaign will begin Sept. 20. As we enter the campaign season, I ask each of you to stop and take 20 minutes of uninterrupted time to do something for both yourself and others—consider a gift to the charity of your choice.

The campaign is not about how much you give. It's about helping others. It's about reaffirming our country's tradition of citizens caring for the health and welfare of others.

Each day you do your part to protect our nation's interests as no other force in the world does, and work daily to preserve our nation's way of life. As an American engaged in the profession of arms, you represent our nation's best. You represent all that makes this country so great—the willingness to work, sacrifice, and when called upon, to go in harm's way to preserve this great republic. In this campaign you need not go into harm's way; instead, you are asked to help support those who tend to the nation's needy and less fortunate.

Support for the organizations in this year's campaign ensures their continued work to protect and improve the quality of life of others. I know many of you



BRIG. GEN. CARL B. JENSEN
Commander MCABWA
Commanding General
MCAS Miramar

give to your community in many ways, and I commend and thank you for your sacrifice and contributions. Likewise, there are those among us who have benefited from the kindness and generosity of others. If this is true for you, I ask you to share with others what those gifts meant to you in your time of need. Rest assured, most in need never expected that they would someday require assistance. Many never imagined they would lack the resources, whether emotional or physical, to handle unforeseen crises. Yet when the need arose, the generosity of past years' campaign contributions ensured support when and where needed.

As you ask yourself what is needed, you may refer to the information in your pledge brochure, but ultimately it comes down to your personal decision. I ask you to consider how much of an impact you want to make. What is it you seek to do—feed a family, purchase a child a wheelchair, resource the volunteer who assists those in need? The choice is yours. Your conscience and concern for the welfare of your countrymen, fellow warriors, friends and neighbors brought you to this station in life. As I do every day, I trust your judgment and rely upon your sense of professionalism and compassion to do what is right.

I urge you to take this opportunity to stand-up and support those who are often unable to stand on their own. As you enrich the lives of others less fortunate, you enrich your own life many times over. Thank you for what you do every day, and for your support of this campaign.

FLIGHT JACKET

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MCLB Band performs with Canadian military bands

Story by Cpl. Isaac Pacheco

MCLB Albany Combat Correspondent

MARINE CORPS LOGISTICS BASE ALBANY, Ga. — Thirty-five members of the Albany Marine Band recently traveled to Canada's capital city to participate in a series of concert and marching events. The band teamed up with the Canadian Ceremonial Guard Band, Royal Canadian Air Force Band, Royal Canadian Artillery Band and others for the Fortissimo 2004 ceremony.

The origin of the ceremony lies in two evening routines formerly carried out by soldiers everyday. The first occurred at sunset when soldiers fired evening guns and withdrew into fortified camps and cities and lowered the flag for the night. This was known as the retreat. The calls that originally ordered this routine were played on the drums and to this day the ceremony is called "beating retreat." The second routine followed at or near dusk, when the night watch was set. Drum and bugle calls indicated when the first and last posts were reached, and drums beat a warning for all soldiers to return to their barracks.

During this routine the band often played popular tunes, the evening hymn, and finally, the national anthem.

Prior to their Aug. 15 departure, Col. John Lopez, commanding officer, Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany, wished the band a safe voyage and reiterated the importance of Marines watching out for each other.

"I'm jealous of your opportunity to go on this trip," Lopez said. "Take pride in yourselves and remember to look out for your fellow Marines. You're representatives for the Marine Corps and for the United States. I know you're going to make us look good."

According to Fortissimo organizers, more than 6,000 ticket-holding spectators, as well as curious onlookers packed into the square surrounding the Canadian Parliament lawn where the event was held.

The overwhelming turnout prompted officials to erect makeshift blockades around the parade field where people along the street could watch without interfering with the performance.

Lt. Col. Mary Eileen Earl, Marine Corps Attache, U.S. Embassy, Ottawa, Canada, was on hand for the opening performance, and said the Albany Marine Band made the previously lackluster ceremony an exciting and triumphant event.

"I was here last year and it wasn't as good as it was tonight with the Marine Corps Band," Earl said. "It's a big deal for the Canadians. They have a real affinity for Marines because they have such a small military force."

Aside from their joint performance with Canadian military bands at the parliament, the Albany Marine Band put on a special solo concert in the grand courtyard of the Canadian War Museum.

"The performance was amazing. I've been here since the museum opened and a lot of bands have played here, but this one was the best," exclaimed Cpl. Fanny St. Amour, medical assistant, Canadian Army. "The crowd usually just sits in their seats, but when the Marine Band played they got up and participated. The way your Dixieland band came



ABOVE: The Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany Band stands proudly beside the Canadian military bands during a presentation of arms during the Fortissimo 2004 ceremony. RIGHT: Staff Sgt. Michael Duiguid, drum major, Marine Corps Logisitcs Base Albany Band, confidently leads his troops onto the parade field during the final night of the Fortissimo 2004 performance. During the performance, the Albany Marine Band teamed up with bands such as the Canadian Ceremonial Guard Band, the Royal Canadian Air Force Band and the Royal Canadian Artillery Band. Photos by Cpl. Isaac Pacheco

up and interacted with the crowd made us feel more like friends than spectators."

Members of the Albany Marine Band's Dixieland ensemble had an opportunity to ply their wares again later that week during a performance at the United States Embassy.

Marines stationed at the embassy were grateful for the impromptu performance, and said they relished the change of pace.

"This is the most fun we've had at this detachment since... I don't know how long," Sgt. Garry Osborne, assistant Marine Security Guard detachment commander, U.S. Embassy Canada, said. "I really enjoyed the Dixieland band performance."

Paul Celluci, American Ambassador to Canada, took a break from his hectic diplomatic schedule to attend the performance, saying after the show that he was truly impressed with the Marines' musical ability and honored that they stopped at the embassy.

"You represent the music of America," Celluci said. "I can't express how much I appreciate your visit and your continued service to our country."



Commandant implements overseas tour changes

Marines face two-year assignments in Iwakuni, Okinawa

Story by Sgt. Cecilia Sequeira

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Michael W. Hagee has changed the policy concerning tour lengths for Marines assigned to III Marine Expeditionary Force or Marine Corps Bases Japan.

The change affects unaccompanied tours for all Marines in a three-phased plan. All unaccompanied tours will be two years instead of one. All accompanied tours will remain three years long.

The new policy will take effect at different times depending on Marines' rank, according to the phase plan.

The first phase began April 15 for all senior leaders assigned to Okinawa in the ranks of colonel, lieutenant colonel, sergeant major, master gunnery sergeant, first sergeant, master sergeant, and all first-term Marines in the ranks of private through corporal. All Marines of these ranks will accept either a 36-month accompanied tour or 24-month unaccompanied orders.

The second phase begins April 15, 2005. It implements the change for all Marine lieutenants and warrant officers. The assignment policy for all senior leaders and privates through corporals without dependants will continue as per phase one.

The third phase is event driven, based on a projected increase of family members and the need for the appropriate infrastructure capable of supporting them.

This phase will begin when all items related to expanding the number of teachers, doctors, housing, and other support are in place. When this happens, all Marines, regardless of rank, will be given either a three-year accompanied tour or a two-year unac-

companied tour.

The commandant stated his intent for the phase plan, "As one of three major war-fighting commands, we must ensure that III MEF has the required resources and personnel stability to respond quickly to any Pacific contingency. In order to achieve the necessary personnel stability and continuity, we have established a 36/24-month Japanese assignment policy. To commence in fiscal year 2004, we will transition to the 36/24-month assignment policy for Japan in a deliberate phase manner. The transition will be event driven and based on the ability of infrastructure to properly care for our Marines and families."

Prior to the change in policy for assignments to Okinawa and Iwakuni, Japan, the Marine Corps was the only service to use the one-year unaccompanied tour option associated with hardship duty location.

In 1987, the Department of Defense granted the Marine Corps the exception to the policy, allowing for the shorter assignment to improve quality of life for Marines and their families. At the time, bases in Japan were less developed, and personnel faced isolation and hardships due to a limited support infrastructure.

According to the commandant, living conditions, travel opportunities, and the cost of living allowance have improved over time, allowing for the shorter assignment policy to be revisited to increase operational stability, continuity, and regional expertise.

Assignment of Marines approaching the end of their service will be handled on a case-by-case basis. For more information on the change in policy, refer to Marine Corps Order P1300.8R, DoD Directive 1315.7, or ALMAR 138/98.

Contraband detection increases base security



Lance Cpl. Tiffany Jackson, K-9 handler, Al Asad Security Battalion, 3rd MAW, and her working dog Lex, search the engine compartment of a vehicle for contraband before it is cleared to enter Al Asad, Iraq, Sept. 13. The 23-year-old Jacksonville, N.C., native has been serving in Iraq for nearly one month with Security Battalion. Photo by Cpl. Paul Leicht

Story by Cpl. Paul Leicht

MWHS-3 Combat Correspondent

AL ASAD, Iraq — During a routine gate inspection here Sept. 10, 4th Low-Altitude Air Defense Battalion Marines and reservist augments working with Security Battalion, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, discovered five Iraqi nationals leaving base with contraband in their possession.

"Some of the items that were found were a number of electronic devices that our Explosive Ordnance Disposal Marines have discovered in the use of (im-

proved explosive devices)," said Capt. Gene E. Colbert, adjutant, 4th LAAD Bn.

Only one of the Iraqis was detained for further questioning.

Recognizing the excellent work and diligent efforts of the Marines under his command, Lt. Col. Jay L. Huston, commanding officer, Security Bn., remarked that the Marines performed their role as base security superbly.

"What we bring to security concerns here is a high degree of situational awareness and an increased level of expertise related to our overall mission," said Maj. Patrick S. Aluotto, entry check point officer-in-charge, 4th LAAD Bn., who is an activated reservist and a narcotics officer with the Los Angeles Police Department. "As trained law enforcement in the civilian sector, we have special skills that translate directly into our security

role here.

"For instance, we know how to check vehicles thoroughly and for secret compartments. We also know how to properly search individuals for hidden items," he added.

Aluotto, who is also in charge of the military police platoon within the security battalion, mentioned that special search and detection teams and equipment are helping to detect suspicious activity.

"The canine handlers and their working dogs (in the battalion) not only help us to detect contraband more easily, but we hope they will serve as a deterrent," said the 32-year-old Los Angeles native. "We are also going to use explosive residue detectors, like we use with civilian police forces, that will also serve as a deterrent against any instances like this as well."

For many of the battalion's Marines, their experience as military and civilian police officers provides them with an extra advantage while performing their duties in Iraq.

"By working the same areas here, like most of us do on a 'beat' as civilian police officers, the Marines (in the battalion) gain a raised level of familiarity with their protection areas," said Maj. Leon Mulholland, commanding officer, Company B, 4th LAAD Bn., who is also an activated reservist and a sheriff in Dawson County, Ga. "We are constantly reevaluating and improving our procedures to continue the protection of our force and the security of this base."

"Therefore, we can effectively detect any suspicious activity or anything out of the ordinary to respond to the situation immediately with the appropriate action," Mulholland finished.



Cpl. Melvin Esguerra, armorer, Marine Aircraft Group 11, accepts a pistol from a Marine at the armory. Although the pistol is government issue, Marines can store their personal weapons at the armory for safekeeping. Photo by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

Armory offers safe storage for privately owned weapons

Story by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

The Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution states, "A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."

Even though Marines have a right to own a weapon, it is illegal to store an unregistered weapon on base. However, if specific procedures are followed, hassles can be avoided.

"If we find an unregistered weapon in a barracks room or base housing, we will report it to the Marine's command," said Sgt. Anthony G. Westrich, vehicle registration staff noncommissioned officer-in-charge, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron. "A Marine should register their weapon at the first available opportunity, to avoid possible trouble."

Anything that fires a projectile using gunpowder or compressed air, such as a paintball gun, is a weapon. In addition, anything with a blade more than three inches in length, to include a noncommissioned officers sword, bayonet or K-bar is also considered a weapon, according to Sgt. William Johnson, armory staff noncommissioned officer-in-charge, Marine Wing Support Squadron 373.

"If there are any questions on if something is a weapon, it should be brought to your unit's armory," said Johnson, a Mulvane, Kan., native.

When coming onto base with a newly obtained or unregistered weapon, a Marine should declare it to the military police officer working at the gate.

"If a Marine does not declare their weapon at the gate and ends up getting pulled over for a random vehicle inspection, they will get reported," explained Westrich, a Niagara, Wis., native.

While the weapon is in transport, it needs to be stored out of reach of the driver, and the ammunition needs to be in a sealed case away from the firearm. For example, the weapon can be in the trunk of the car, while the ammunition is on the passenger seat.

Once making it past the gate, the weapon handler should visit the vehicle registration office first. The registration office registers weapons Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. until noon.

If the office is closed, the weapon can be brought over to the Provost Marshal's Office

armory for overnight storage until the vehicle registration office opens.

The owner should then take their weapon to the registration office and fill out the registration form. The form asks details such as the serial number, model and make, as well as the address at which the weapon will be stored.

After completing the form at the vehicle registration office, the weapon owner will be given a weapon registration card, which should be carried at all times.

"Even if you don't live on base, it is advisable to register your weapon here," said Westrich. "If you have your weapon stolen or if you lose your paperwork, you will still have a backup copy of your registration here."

After registering, Marines living in the barracks must keep their weapon in the station armory. Servicemembers and other personnel living off base or in base housing may keep their weapons at the armory for safekeeping or at their home.

"I recommend that Marines store their weapons here," said Cpl. Melvin Esguerra, armorer, Marine Aircraft Group 11. "It is much safer here and you can avoid hassles if you store your weapon at the armory."

Once at the armory, servicemembers will fill out a form to release the armory from liability. After the form is filled out, the weapon will be given a courtesy inspection by armory personnel. Then, weapon owners will fill out a form authorizing them to store their weapon in their unit's armory. Once the form is filled out, it is submitted to the commanding officer of that Marine's squadron for approval.

The Marine will then receive an equipment custody record if they are checking in other gear like ammunition or magazines, and a registration card, similar to the weapons issue card.

When a Marine wants to take their weapon, he or she will fill out a form at the armory and take the form to their commanding officer, who will approve or disapprove their request.

"If you want to take your weapon out at night or on a weekend, I advise coming in advance before your trip to let us know when you will be going," explained Johnson. "It is still up to the commanding officer, and it may be hard to get their approval if you wait too long."

For more information on registering a weapon, contact PMO at 577-4068. For details on storing a weapon, contact your squadron's armorer.

Miramar, community firefighters train at water park

Story by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

The Miramar Fire Department sent its firefighters to Knotts Soak City U.S.A Water Park in Chula Vista, Calif., for a few hours of additional training Sept. 9.

The water park closed its doors for visitors the day after Labor Day and opened them it to firefighters and other first responders like policemen and paramedics for the Sixth Annual Swift Water Rescue Awareness Training.

The class that the Miramar Fire Department attended was strictly for firefighters. From the Federal Fire Department to the La Mesa Fire Department, firefighters all over San Diego County came out to gain more experience in the water.

“Firefighters are responsible for so many rescue domains,” explained Gary Breton, course instructor and Chula Vista firefighter. “This training will prepare them if they ever end up in a situation involving water, like a flash flood.”

The firefighters arrived at the water park around 1:00 p.m., when they were given a brief lecture on the importance of water safety and various survival techniques that they can use in a dangerous situation.

“Do not go near the water if you do not have to,” said John Bates, course instructor and El Cajon, Calif., native. “You want to rescue the victim, not become one.”

Bates and the other two instructors repeatedly stressed that whenever possible, the water should be avoided.

“You are not as mobile in the water and when you get out, your suit will be much heavier than before, limiting your rescuing abilities,” said Breton, a Chula Vista, Calif., native.

After teaching the importance of staying away from the water, the instructors educated the firefighters on what to look out for if they ever ended up in a deep water situation.

For example, a rescuer should never stand up in the water because they can get stuck.

“You should go into defense mode with your feet up when entering the water,” said Breton. “The water could bend you over, causing injury to yourself.”

Once the instructors were finished explaining the hazards of the water, the students went out to do training.

“I can’t teach you (out of a book) how important staying out of the water is,” said Brenton. “But, if you go through and experience the obstacles firsthand, it will give you a better understanding of the lesson.”



Firefighters from the Miramar Fire Department compete in a boat operations exercise at Knotts Soak City U.S.A Water Park in Chula Vista, Calif. The boat operations simulated river rescuing, in which firefighters must rescue each other and navigate their lifeboats through the wave pool. Photo by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

The firefighters tackled the throw bag training evolution first. Inner tubes were set up in the water to simulate victims, while the students tossed the throw bags to the tubes.

“It’s easy to forget even the simplest of techniques,” explained John Meyer, a Miramar firefighter and San Diego native. “It is important to practice the techniques here, because when you’re out rescuing a victim, you cannot afford to take the time to remember everything.”

After the throw bag training, the firefighters participated in boat operations, which simulated river rescuing. The firefighters were divided up into two teams, and competed against each other by navigating their way back and forth through the pool. The teams had to rescue a victim, escape from an overturned boat, get back into the boat and row to the finish line, while the waves rocked them back and forth while racing.

After completing the team exercise, the firefighters lined up individually to participate in one of the toughest parts of the training exercises, the strainer.

One by one, the students swam over a replicated log. The catch: they could not touch the pool floor, and they had to do it while the slide in back of them gushed gallons of water over them, hindering their abilities.

“This exercise was a real eye opener for me. It made me aware of how powerful the water really is,” said Capt. Greg Magill, Miramar fire captain and Chula Vista, Calif., native. “The main thing it did however, was increase my awareness and confidence in water. You never know when a situation like that could happen.”

In order to gain more knowledge and be ready for any type of situation, more Miramar firefighters are going out to the same course on other dates as well.

“The main thing that this training did for me was increase my comfort level. This is key because you’re going to rescue someone who is not comfortable at all,” said Meyer. “You need to make sure you know what you are doing in situations like these to help them and you need proper training like this to get to that comfort level.”



A firefighter from the Miramar Fire Department struggles through the strainer at Knotts Soak City U.S.A. Water Park in Chula Vista, Calif. Firefighters had to get over the log without touching the bottom of the pool, while water poured from a slide in back of them. Photo by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

HMLA-169 escort missions support convoy operations

Story by Cpl. Paul Leicht

MWHS-3 Combat Correspondent

AL ASAD, Iraq — The belief in guardian angels can be traced throughout antiquity. From Babylonian and Assyrian monuments, to the Bible and more modern times, their mission has been to serve as protectors, with a special charge to deliver others from danger.

For Marines traveling about the hostile combat environment of Iraq, having a sentinel over their shoulder armed with rockets, missile launchers and machine guns can be a reassuring presence.

Particularly in the case of Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 169, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, providing ground and airborne escort to safeguard passage is an aspect of their operational doctrine that has not gone unappreciated.

Packing a huge psychological value, the squadron's escort duties are considered priceless by fellow Marines.

"We like having them around," said Lt. Col. Thomas M. Doman, executive officer, MWSG-37. "A convoy incurs a lot of added risk when traveling without a gunship, and it is nice to know they are overhead."

Doman added that from their commanding officer, Col. Juan G. Ayala, on down, when his unit's Marines hear a gunship's 'whoop, whoop' thumping

overhead, it really makes a big difference.

Working in mixed sections to provide security from the air, the 'Vipers' fly two types of lethal helicopter gunships: the AH-1W Super Cobra and the UH-1N Huey.

"In addition to close air support, we fly ground escort missions for convoys all over Iraq," said Capt. John J. Bancroft, UH-1N pilot, HMLA-169. "We primarily look out for ambushes, (improvised explosive devices) and provide navigational assistance for the forces on the ground.

"For (HMLA-169), visual (reconnaissance) is an implied task," he added. "At night we use (forward-looking infrared sensors) to help detect targets, disturbed ground, rocket tubes, rocks along road-sides; pretty much anything that might be a danger to the convoys. If we see it, we contact the forces on the ground and move in to neutralize the threat."

The 31-year-old Oxford, N.Y., native and Naval Academy graduate noted that the Huey gunship has some special traits that make it well suited for escort missions.

"The Huey's strength is that it has crew-served weapons with an almost 180 degree field of fire on either side, including aft quadrant defense capability," said Bancroft. "In addition the Huey can put down quickly and pick up casualties on the ground if necessary after an attack."



A UH-1N Huey gunship from Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 169 flies over Iraq during an aerial escort mission July 27. The Huey is well-suited for ground escorts because it has crew-served weapons with an almost 180 degree field of fire and the ability to land and pick up casualties if necessary. Photo by Sgt. Nathan K. Laforte

Working together, the Huey and the Super Cobra provide "mutual supportability" as a section for escorting ground convoys; however, the Super Cobra also has another important responsibility in the air.

"Foremost, the Cobra's job in the airborne escort role is to protect (medical evacuation helicopters) from any ground threats, because the Cobra can keep up with them more easily than the slower Huey," said Capt. William B. Fenwick, AH-1W pilot, HMLA-169. "The Super Cobra's armament is a big deterrent against small arms fire from the ground.

"If insurgents want to try and take a

shot at the medevacs with us alongside them, they are playing with fire."

Fenwick, a 30-year-old native of Camp Hill, Pa., added that with more time in the air, 'Viper' pilots gain an ever-increasing familiarity with the Iraqi desert terrain and use it to their advantage when looking for suspicious activity during escort missions.

"Unlike the open desert, the hazards related to flying escort missions are compounded over urban areas," said Fenwick. "We fly low and fast, because — even for us — anything can be a threat, so we try to avoid certain areas as much as possible."

Marine squadron uses GPS parachutes in Iraq

Story by Cpl. Paul Leicht

MWHS-3 Combat Correspondent

AL ANBAR PROVINCE, Iraq — Reservists with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 452, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, are putting a new cargo parachute system to the test during combat operations here.

Recently, the New York-based squadron successfully delivered food and supplies to Marines at Camp Korean Village during a combat assault support mission Sept. 7, featuring a Sherpa global-positioning parachute delivery system.

“Doing this type of mission in a combat environment is what we are here for,” said Atlanta native Lt.Col. Bradley S. James, commanding officer, VMGR-452. “The tactical capability of the KC-130 gives us a unique ability to even do this at night with (night vision goggles). This mission also took a lot of coordination between us and the supply Marines on the ground.”

With a total load weighing more than 23,000 pounds, the VMGR-452 KC-130T reached the camp in less than one hour. However, preparations for the complex mission took a substantial amount of time.

“This is my first time preparing a mission like this and it took me about two to three hours of planning for each hour of flight time,” said Sgt. Eric J. Bynum, navigator, VMGR-452, and a

native of Waxahachie, Texas. “For a short flight like this one, it took me about 8 hours to plan the drop since we are actually performing two drops at two different altitudes.”

Dropped at a lower altitude and at high speed, the first batch of supplies was dropped using conventional military parachutes.

“We fly lower during a standard drop so we can ensure accurate delivery, but we have to maintain a higher rate of speed because we are more vulnerable (to enemy attack) being lower to the ground,” said Bynum. “Before we drop the supplies using the Sherpas, we will climb to a higher, safer altitude.”

Making its debut during a similar drop Aug. 9, also above Camp Korean Village, the commercially-produced Sherpa precision-guided parachute system uses a Global Positioning System computer and control lines to steer itself from an altitude of up to five miles, down to within a few meters of the designated target area on the ground, said Staff Sgt. Tammy A. Belleville, 1st Air Delivery Platoon jumpmaster, Combat Service Support Battalion 7, 1st Force Service Support Group.

“Basically, the Sherpa is an oversized 900-square-foot parachute canopy attached to a servomotor,” said the 40-year-old Oceanside, Calif. native. “The GPS computer calculates everything from winds, direction of flight, target coordinates, altitude and other informa-



Staff Sgt. Tammy A. Belleville, 1st Air Delivery Platoon jumpmaster, Combat Service Support Battalion 7, checks a Sherpa self-guided parachute delivery system during a resupply drop from a VMGR-452 KC-130T Hercules over Camp Korean Village, Iraq, Sept. 8. The commercially produced Sherpa can steer cargo from an altitude of five miles, down to within a few meters of a designated drop point. *Photo by Cpl. Paul Leicht*

tion to steer the load to the designated delivery point on the deck.”

The servomotor inside the Sherpa unit steers the control lines that direct the parachute and the load to the designated target point on the ground, said Belleville.

From an altitude of more than 10,000 feet, the Sherpas can guide their loads to other CSSB Marines on the deck below in five to 10 minutes, depending on the

conditions, said Belleville.

With the supplies safely on the ground, the Marines aboard the KC-130T returned to their base here with another successful mission behind them.

“The bottom line is the Marines out there at Korean Village have their supplies and that makes us feel good knowing we can deliver what they need quickly under combat conditions,” said James.

First female base sergeant major still an influence today

Story by Cpl. T.D. Smith

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

People join the service for many reasons. Retired Sgt. Maj. Eleanor Judge said she joined because the reservists met on Thursday nights and she had that night free. On June 2, 1949, when Judge enlisted, she found something to fill her Thursday evenings, a career and a love for the Corps.

After joining the Women Marines of the 2nd Infantry Battalion, Judge spent three hours on Thursdays learning how to drill and stand inspections. With the need to send men to fight in Korea, the reserves were called to active duty. With a starting pay of \$10 a month, this began her active duty career. Her career lasted three decades and included the distinction of being the first female to attain the title of base sergeant major.

“We had an inkling of what was going to happen. The news was out in the paper about Korea. All of a sudden, I got a notice in the mail and it said, well, what I like to tell people it said, is you are cordially invited to report for active duty,” said Judge. “So off I tootled to the Fargo Building (to report) and we boarded a troop train on Aug. 14, and off we went to Camp Lejeune.”

The women reserve unit had sufficient time in service to bypass recruit training. However, Judge could not escape the drill field of Parris Island.

“I never went to recruit training (at Parris Island), though I was a drill instructor there three times,” said Judge. “Well, a DI, a first sergeant and then the sergeant major of Fourth Battalion. I kept going back to Parris Island. They were going to get me one day. I might just well have gone to boot camp,” she said.

Parris Island did get Judge, but not before recruit-

ing duty got her for three years in Pittsburgh, Pa.

“(Recruiting duty) I did not like. I wanted to be at a base,” she said. “I was a Marine and I wanted to be a part of the Marine Corps.”

Judge does not hide her dislike for recruiting duty, but she is steadfast about her love of the Marine Corps.

“Everybody says ‘are you married?’ No, I’m not married. ‘Well did you ever marry?’ No, I never married. ‘Well what did you do, marry the Marine Corps?’ Yes! I married the Marine Corps. Oh I had boyfriends. I got engaged a couple of times, but it interfered with my Marine Corps life.”

“I was the third-senior sergeant major when I retired. I was never selected sergeant major of the Marine Corps, but I know my book was reviewed by

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Marines bowl for Commanding General's Cup

Story by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Marines on the air station are currently competing for the Commanding General's Cup during the intramural bowling league at the Jet Lanes every Tuesday at 5:00 p.m.

The summer tournament started Aug. 3 and is scheduled to end Sept. 21. At this time, six teams are competing to take home the glory.

Currently, the Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 16 Hydraulics have taken the lead by 17 points over the other teams. Combat Service Support Company 134, Team A, is not far behind the Hydraulics with 16 winning points. The MALS-16 Power Plants are in third place with 13 points.

"We want to come in first place this year. In the last tournament, we came in sixth, so we plan to redeem ourselves this time," said CWO4 Steve DeLaTorre, executive and maintenance officer, CSSC-134 and Team A bowler. "Our strategy is to pump each other up and help out as a team."

Each team is comprised of four competing Marines, more or less depending on the availability of Marines.

The A-Team, composed of four Marines from Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, competed with two Marines in the Aug. 31 game.

"The tournament is pretty flexible because the availability of Marines can be restricted by deployments and other obligations," mentioned Sgt. Woodrow Brown, training noncommissioned officer-in-charge, H&HS and A-Team bowler.

The size of the team does not make a difference because the scores of each individual bowler are averaged out to get the team's total score. As a rule, each bowler played a game prior to beginning the tournament and received a handicap based on their abilities.

"This is an individual sport, where you are mainly competing against yourself. It's not like other intramural events where you all have to work together," explained Cpl. Robin King, MALS-16 power plants mechanic and MALS-16 Power Plants bowler. "I'm playing because it's free bowling and for the esprit de corps. Even though you are not playing together, you still get the camaraderie from doing something together as a shop."

Each bowler plays a total of three games during each tournament. The player's scores are then averaged, giving their team a point value.

The three winning teams will receive a plaque and certificate for each player as well as points for the Commanding General's Cup.

"It's not winning that is most important, but the camaraderie that playing together as a shop brings," said Cpl. Shane Burrow, armorer, CSSC-134 and Team A bowler. "Our unity has increased since our shop started bowling together. That's what really counts in this competition."

Units can still sign up for the fall bowling tournament, which is scheduled to begin Sept. 21. For more information, call the bowling center at 577-4131.



Master Sgt. Anthony Jones, division chief, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 16, bowls for his team, the MALS-16 Power Plants. Jones and his teammates bowl every Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. in the intramural bowling league. Photo by Lance Cpl Skye Jones

September 11: have we forgotten?

Commentary by Cpl. T.D. Smith

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

The three-year anniversary of the attacks of September 11 has come and gone. For those who have a direct connection to the tragedy, it has been memorialized with moments of silence. At New York City's "Ground Zero," two vertical lights beamed into the sky in a representation of the World Trade Center's Twin Towers. For the rest of America, however, the sentiment has become either estranged or a spark for political rhetoric.

The New York City skyline stands as a scar of the attacks that took place three years ago, which, if you live in New York, might be a constant reminder of the tragic event. Further, there is certain camaraderie between firefighters and police officers that bonds and connects them, and thus they too will have a different reverence for September 11. Of course, those who have lost loved ones in the attacks will always have a connection to that day.

However, anyone who has lost someone they care for will always remember the date of the loss. The idea and message of September 11 has evolved over the past few years. In the wake of the initial events, even thousands of miles away in Hollywood, producers dimmed their galas and postponed award events. Sporting event officials halted and rescheduled competitions. The following year, servicemembers from Miramar turned out at San Diego's Fire Station One to show respect for the losses in the attacks, but the general public and social

functions were otherwise normal.

For the most part, this year there were no highly visible commemorative events outside of the Northeast. Some of us remembered only incidentally after realizing the date.

What a majority of Americans have done with the ideology of the attacks is not too far off what usually happens with sensational events. It turns into a course of action in personal pursuits and interests.

The public corporation that owns the WTC site has leveled a \$7 billion lawsuit against the Saudi government. The investment firm, Cantor Fitzgerald, has

been joined by the Port Authorities of both New York and New Jersey in the lawsuit.

In addition to the legal entanglements, political pundits seem keen on using the attacks for furthering personal goals. There were those who used the attacks to reform intelligence gathering practices or to change policies concerning homeland security.

Naturally, we as a nation and we as people, need to heal and move on after tragic events. Regardless of what we do however, to relive 9/11 merely as a means to an end is disingenuous and one even the great manipulator Machiavelli would find distasteful.



Fire fighters battle stubborn fires through the night at the Pentagon Sept. 11, 2001. The fire was caused when a hijacked American Airlines flight slammed into the building earlier that day. The terrorist attack caused extensive damage to the west face of the building and followed similar attacks on the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. DoD photo by Helene C. Stikkel

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whole process to make sure everything runs smoothly," said Staff Sgt. Ricardo Sola, staff noncommissioned officer-in-charge, avionics division. "This type of leadership is effective because it gets the mission accomplished, while raising the camaraderie of the Marines."

Besides having good leadership, each shop in the squadron works collectively to accomplish any mission they are assigned.

"Everyone here is just part of a big team. We all play a part in getting the job done," said Sola, a Miami native. "Every shop, from air frames to the tool room, works together."

SGTMAJ

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the commandant. I didn't have the experience of the 'grunt' Marine and that was probably the bottom line. Today's women Marines, are actually out in the fields and know the weapons and the combat side of the house and not just the administrative side."

When Judge took over the assignment of sergeant major of Camp Pendleton, she was the most senior sergeant major in the Marine Corps, and she explains the other sergeants major knew it.

"Sgt. Maj. Crawford (1st Marine Division Sgt. Maj. when Judge was being transferred to Pendleton) always told a story 'Oh lord!, When I heard she was commin', I just held on to my chair

Everybody needs each other to get the job done and each shop will step up in a heartbeat to help out, added Cpl. Daniel Ramos, avionics technician, HMH-462.

"I can honestly say that this is one of the best squadrons in the Marine Corps," said Reyes. "These Marines have done some pretty amazing things, and through the blood and sweat, they have never complained."

Other Marines, like Ramos, would not want to be part of any other squadron.

"Changing squadrons would be like changing schools," explained Ramos. "I have already built family-type relationships here. We just all work together so well."

HMH-462's advanced party deployed to Afghanistan Sept 15. The main body is scheduled to leave in October.

because I knew she was going to take it away from me,' Judge continued.

"Because all I had to do was say I wanted it, but I didn't have the experience to take over at division. I just did not have that (combat experience). Today, I think a woman could step in there quite nicely."

Master Sgt. Ann Brown, transient chief, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, worked with Judge when she was a company first sergeant at Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, Calif.

"I was a lance corporal through sergeant when I knew Judge as my first sergeant. What I learned from her was that women can make it, especially in the enlisted ranks. It gave you hope. You can do it if you just stick it out," said Brown.

Others have learned different lessons

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"The course may seem harsh," Blankenship said, "but this is real life out here, and the standards are much higher."

"It's a dangerous job, but it's got to be done," said instructor Lance Cpl. Jason J. Gibbs, combat engineer, CSSB-7, 1st FSSG.

A native of Quincy, Ill., Gibbs served in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom and helped clear mines for bases being built in Iraq. Now, the 22-year-old is teaching other Marines how to operate the new detector.

"There's no one who doesn't get a little nervous and scared when out there clearing a minefield," said Gibbs, "but if you take your time and do it right then you'll be ok."

from Judge's career and her promotions.

"You know that (attaining high rank as a female) is possible, but when you see them, when you meet them, it is more tangible," said Gunnery Sgt. Renee Davey, headquarters first sergeant, Marine Aircraft Group 11.

Davey, who knows Judge from the Women Marines Association, described Judge. "I think she is so straight forward. She is just so ostentatious and I'm sure she always has been. She seems like she always would have been."

For other female Marines and females in traditionally male roles, someone at some time, had to step up and be the first to open doors. Judge did that when she took over as the first female sergeant major of a Marine Corps base.

Miramar Movies

The Station Auditorium is located in building 2242, and will be featuring the following movies free of charge. Outside food and drinks are not permitted. For more information, contact 577-4143 or log on to www.mccsmiramar.com.

Today:
4:30 p.m. Harold and Kumar go to White Castle (R)
6:30 p.m. Collateral (R)
8:45 p.m. The Manchurian Candidate (R)

Saturday:
6:30 p.m. Yu-Gi-Oh! (PG)
8:30 p.m. Little Black Book (PG-13)

Sunday:
1 p.m. Catwomen (PG-13)
6:30 p.m. The Bourne Supremacy (PG-13)

Wednesday:
6:30 p.m. Alien vs. Predator (PG-13)

Thursday:
2 p.m. Princess Diaries 2 (PG)
6:30 p.m. Collateral (R)

Presentations and time subject to change.

Recruiter’s Assisstance

Recruiting Station Orange County is looking for motivated Marines in the ranks of private through sergeant to return home and help recruiting efforts during the November and December holiday seasons.

TAD orders can be issued for Recruiter’s Assisstance for up to 30 days. Interested Marines should inform their section, then call Gunnery Sgt. Engelhardt at (649) 261-2049.

Religious Services

The Chaplain’s Office is located in building 5632 and coordinates regularly-scheduled worship services. For the location and meeting schedules of religious activities contact the Chaplain’s Office at 577-1333.

Sunday:
9:30 a.m. Protestant worship service
11 a.m. Roman Catholic Eucharist

Wednesday:
7 p.m. Baptist service
Monday-Friday:
11:30 a.m. Roman Catholic Daily Mass

Jewish:
7 p.m. First Friday of the month MCRD
7:30 p.m. Last Friday at Edson Range Chapel

3rd MAW OIF book

Marine Corps Association bookstores will soon carry an exclusive new title detailing the exploits of 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“Third Marine Aircraft Wing: Operation Iraqi Freedom” follows the journey of 3rd MAW in support of I Marine Expeditionary Force and coalition forces in liberating Iraq and toppling Saddam Hussein during OIF. The book is a testament to the Marines’ well-proven, colorful battle history.

The cost of the book is \$34 for members and \$36 for non-members.

Marines can visit the MCA Bookstore located at Camp Pendleton’s Main Exchange, Building T1100 on Vandegrift Ave., or call 888-237-7683 to order a copy.

Fire Awareness

The Cleveland National Forest has implemented a new Fire Danger Awareness System for residents and visitors. Residents and visitors can now call (619) 563-2183 or log on to www.fs.fed.us/r5/cleveland to find out current fire danger levels before visiting the Cleveland National Forest. The Forest Service is asking all visitors to check prior to visiting, as the fire level will determine what activities will be allowed in the forest.

MAC Flight

A Military Airlift Command flight will be available to Quantico, Va., Oct. 31 for the Marine Corps Marathon. For more information, call 577-7700.

Impounded Vehicles

The following vehicles have been impounded and need to be claimed by the owners. Towing fees average \$113, storage fees \$28 daily. For more information contact the Provost Marshal’s Office at 577-1461.

Vehicle:	License:	Date:	Stored at:
Green 1995 Dodge Neon	CA/3KGZ374	Jul. 7	Eastgate Towing
Blue 1989 Subaru GL	CA/1REE135	Jul. 16	Eastgate Towing
Red Honda Prelude	NONE	Jul. 16	Eastgate Towing
Red Sea King Boat	NONE	Jul. 22	Eastgate Towing
White Hydra Sports Boat	FL/CZ639M	Jul. 22	Eastgate Towing
Black VW Jetta	NONE	Jul. 27	Eastgate Towing